

Date: April 15, 2026

To: **Mayor and Council.**

Name and title: Andy Beesley, Director of Civic Facilities and Events

Subject: Prince George Aquatic Centre Construction Update April 2026

Attachment(s): NONE.

Recommendation(s):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated April 15, 2026 from the Director of Civic Facilities titled "Prince George Aquatic Centre Construction Update April 2026"

Purpose:

This report provides an update on the Prince George Aquatic Centre building envelope construction project. The total project cost is \$37 million. This project was approved by Council on April 9, 2024, and includes:

- Replacement of the entire building envelope (walls, doors, windows, roof, soffits, louvers, etc.) to improve energy efficiency, that exceed BC Building Code requirements, and repairing structural steel columns;
- Installation of metal panels on exterior walls, repairing entry columns, and exterior lights and emergency system lighting;
- Adding a dehumidification system and new electrical transformer with associated electrical system upgrade;
- Replacement of select air handling units, adding energy recovery, and related cooling coils, replacement of the HVAC system controls, and water heating system improvements;
- Replacement of the acoustic baffles (the panels that hang from the ceiling and control the noise inside the building), moveable pool bulkheads, selected overhead and underwater light fixtures, and hydronic (heat) piping reconfiguration;
- Installation of tile in the leisure pool and replacement of tiles in the lobby, change rooms, and pool deck and interior repainting;
- Increased access controls, accessibility improvements, interior signage, reconfigured reception desk, and replacement of the fire alarm system and sprinkler heads.

Operations and project planning

The Aquatic Centre is 30 years old and needs significant infrastructure upgrades to ensure it's in great shape for decades to come. The pool has entered into the infrastructure replacement phase which is the normal life cycle for all civic facilities of this nature. To be clear, this work isn't due to a lack of maintenance – the pool undergoes regular annual maintenance and upgrades.

This project officially got underway in October 2025, and the pool was closed as of January 1, 2026.

Since the fall of 2025, staff have had to pivot plans and adjust priorities due to the size and complexity of the project. This is common for large capital projects, where flexibility is key as new findings can often lead to incremental adjustments throughout the project timeline. An overview of this component of the project so far:

- The City signed a contract with the construction manager (CM) in October 2025.
- The CM immediately performed a constructability review of the plans and specifications as well as destructive testing inside and outside of the building. This type of testing could not be thoroughly completed far in advance of the construction phases as it would have resulted in operational issues while the pool continued to be in full use.
- The destructive testing resulted in additional findings that showed further issues not visible from the surfaces (e.g., water damage, corrosion, mold) that needed to be added and/or clarified to the drawings and specifications.
- The CM performed a preliminary cost estimate to ensure previous estimates were up to date, which resulted in a new estimate that exceeded the City's budget allowance.
- As the City is unwilling to allow this project to exceed the approved budget, a significant value-engineering effort was put forth, which delayed the release of the construction tender as the updated value engineering items required the consultant to revise plans and specifications.
- Tender documents were provided to the CM and 26 different bid packages were released for tender in January.
- Three site visits were held and multiple addendums issued before tenders closed in February.
- The City signed contracts for construction activities in March.

As a result of this conservative and methodical approach, the Aquatic Centre project is currently projected to be under budget.

A major component of this project includes operational planning, which is complex and requires a significant amount of lead time. Operational planning for the Canfor Leisure Pool and the P.G. Aquatic Centre occurs one year *in advance* of service delivery. The two pools offer distinct operational differences, minimizing redundancy in services while maximizing overall pool space utilization. Aquatic facilities offer far more than just a place to cool off, they contribute to the health, safety, and overall quality of life of the community. Examples of advanced planning include:



- **Programs** – Registration for swimming lessons, birthday parties, and advanced lifesaving/lifeguarding courses opens three months prior to the start of each program season (fall/winter and spring/summer). Each season runs for approximately six months.
- **School Bookings** – Registration opens seven months in advance of the school year (September–June).
- **Swim Clubs** – Requests are received two months prior to the start of each program season. Each season runs for approximately six months.
- **Groups/Organizations** – Many groups and organizations (e.g., CDC, physiotherapy providers, First Nations groups) use the pools under formal agreements for specific facilities, pool times, and designated water space.
- **Drop-in Programs/Services** – A wide range of drop-in opportunities are offered, including Aquafit, Sensory Swim, discounted swims, adult swims, wave pool use, waterslide access, NinjaCross, lane swimming, diving boards, and general recreational space. All drop-in programs and services are planned one year in advance to align with operational requirements and ensure appropriate allocation of pool space.
- **Staffing** – The City employs approximately 100 aquatic staff (FTE 51) to meet safety and operational requirements. Most employees are part-time high school and university students with limited availability due to academic and extracurricular commitments. All staff hours scheduled are in accordance with CUPE 1048 requirements, the BC employment standards act, and certification awards for the position. The week-to-week schedule is complex and any significant operational changes such as a pool closure require the schedule to be built from scratch. All Aquatic Centre staff have been moved to the Canfor Leisure Pool, with no layoffs or reductions in hours for full time and regular part time staff. Casual employees are scheduled (as always) according to required levels of service.

When a pool closure occurs, programs and services from the affected facility cannot simply be transferred to another pool on the same schedule. Significant adjustments are required due to limited available water space. Advanced planning by City staff helps minimize disruption to customers and reduces the likelihood of cancelling existing programs, school bookings, swim club allocations, group agreements, and drop-in services.

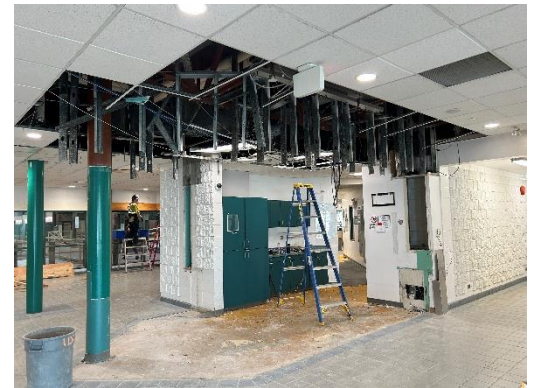
Demolition and construction to date

In January, staff began preparing the building for construction. A summary of work at this stage includes:

- Vending machines removed, offices emptied, pro-shop emptied and all merchandise stored, furniture disassembled and put into storage, appliances disconnected and put into storage.
- Pool equipment pieces/items relocated to the Canfor Pool.
- Pool water super-chlorinated and allowed to run through the pipes/pumps/surge tanks prior to draining.
- Lane markers, safety equipment and flags removed.
- Three pools drained (this took about three weeks to complete). Once the tanks were empty, pool chemicals removed from site.
- Maintenance staff relocated a smaller scoreboard to Canfor Pool.



A significant effort was required to clean out all the maintenance materials, spare parts, attic stock and general purge of 30 years of miscellaneous items. The building was emptied of all the items required for aquatics and their programming, and all of those items were transported to an off-site storage space. This entire clean out, packing and relocation took about 3 months to complete.



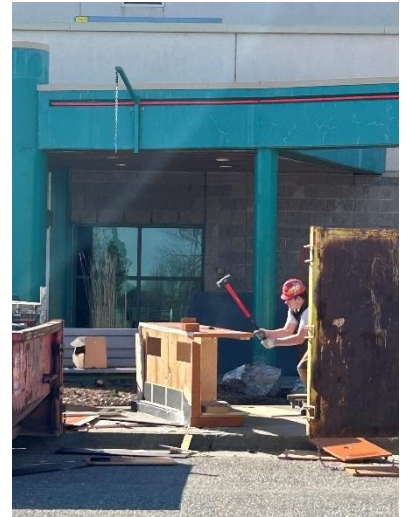
An air-tightness test was performed, and will be used as a baseline. Another air-tightness test will be performed after the project has been completed and the data will be compared to the baseline.

Planning and actions have been taken to address intrusion alarms, access controls and fire alarm systems, as well as door locks for the duration of construction. Additionally, Wi-Fi and internet connectivity required additional planning and action to move from City infrastructure (re: HVAC and other control systems) to a system controlled by the contractor.



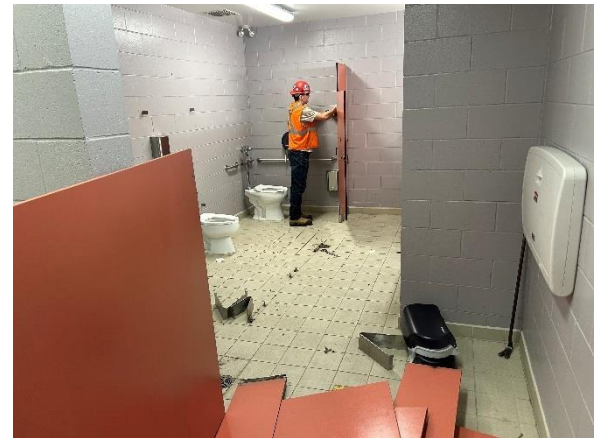
A summary of construction works currently complete or in progress includes:

- Interior finishes demolition:
 - Reception desk and associated millwork, including bulkhead finishes
 - Ceiling tile removals
 - Change rooms / washroom finishes removals including toilet partitions, benches, vanities, mirrors and integrated plumbing fixtures (toilets, sinks)
 - Interior signage removals and feature wood finish demolition
 - Front of house flooring removals have begun (carpet and tile)
 - Natatorium finish removals – bleachers staged for removal, post and rope removals, stainless guardrail removals, etc.
- Mechanical and electrical:
 - Mechanical room - select equipment demo
 - Electrical – disconnections and removals to support finishes demo
- Site and safety:
 - Fence erected
 - Site trailer and storage setup
 - Interior safety barricades installed
 - Shoring design work is ongoing



Upcoming work includes:

- Continue interior demolition and removals
 - Front of house tilework and other finishes
 - Natatorium valence removals
 - Structural column repair – concrete removals to accommodate
 - Planning for exterior masonry veneer block removal



Summary and conclusion:

This comprehensive complex project is well underway and will be completed on time and on budget. Further updates will be provided throughout the project.

Respectfully submitted:

Andy Beesley, Director of Civic Facilities and Events

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2026/04/27